



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Gov. Gregoire proclaims Aug. 13-20 as Farmers Market Week

OLYMPIA – Washington state residents are encouraged to show their support for small family farms by shopping at their local farmers market during “Washington State Farmers Market Week,” which begins Saturday.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA) join Governor Christine Gregoire in proclaiming Aug. 13-20 as a time to recognize “the many benefits of our local farmers market.”

Farmers markets in Washington increased from 60 in 1998 to 90 in 2005. Statewide, farmers markets reported \$22 million in sales in 2004, with most of those dollars going directly to Washington’s family farmers.

“Farmers markets play a vital role in rural and urban economies throughout the state, and are increasing in popularity every day,” said Zachary Lyons, executive director of the WSFMA. “With sales increasing at a rate of 20 percent a year, it’s clear that Washington’s citizens and communities are embracing farmers markets.”

Farmers markets provide family farmers with direct access to the full retail dollar for their products, and provide the public with access to some of the freshest, best-tasting produce available. Also, surveys show that half of the people shopping at farmers markets spend as much money at neighboring businesses, bolstering the surrounding economy as well.

One of WSDA’s goals is to increase farmer and consumer awareness of the convenience and value of farmers markets. The Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program at WSDA and WSFMA work together to develop farmers markets across the state.

Many farmers markets are hosting special events to celebrate their growth and popularity. For farmers market locations, contact information, and more information on the WSFMA, visit www.wafarmersmarkets.com.

For a printed listing of all WSFMA markets in Washington state, call (206) 706-1932.

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